

The indicators for the region, as well as comparisons with other metropolitan regions, are provided in the following report. As in the previous State of the Region reports, the indicators are grouped by subject, referring back to sections of SCAG's Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide and Regional Transportation Plan. The indicators are directly linked to adopted policies and guidelines for the region.





## POPULATION

California, the most populous state in the country, is projected to have the fastest rate of population growth during the next twenty years. California's rapid growth will be the result of both a high rate of natural increase and a high rate of immigration. The average annual birth rate for California is expected to be 20 births per 1,000 population, and the state is expected to attract more than one-third of the country's immigrants. At the end of the 20th century, California already had the largest foreign-born population both in numbers (over 8 million) and in percentage of the total (over one-fourth).

### The Region

The SCAG region has over 16 million residents and covers 38,000 square miles. There are 184 cities within the six counties of Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura. Table 1 documents the population growth in the region, from under one million in the early 1900s to an expected 22 million by the year 2020. Besides California, Texas and New York are the only states with a population larger than the SCAG region.

Table 1

Population in the SCAG Region with forecast to 2020 (000)					
County	1910	1940	1970	1998	2020
Imperial	13.5	59.7	74.5	144.1	280.3
Los Angeles	504.1	2,785.6	7,032.1	9,213.5	12,249.1
Orange	34.4	130.8	1,420.4	2,721.7	3,244.6
Riverside	34.7	105.5	459.1	1,478.8	2,816.0
San Bernardino	56.7	161.1	684.1	1,635.2	2,830.0
Ventura	18.3	69.7	376.4	732.0	932.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>661.8</b>	<b>3,312.5</b>	<b>10,046.5</b>	<b>15,925.3</b>	<b>22,352.4</b>

Source: California Department of Finance and SCAG estimates and forecasts

1998 data are SCAG estimates as of July; 2020 forecasts are based on estimates by cities.

There is no ethnic or racial majority group in the region. Between the 1980 and the 1990 Census, the Hispanic population grew from 24 percent to 33 percent of the total, and the Asian population grew from 6 percent to 9 percent of the total. The white proportion of the population declined from over 60 percent of the total in 1980 to under 50 percent in 1990. African Americans account for approximately 8 percent of the population. It is expected that the 2000 Census will show that these trends continued throughout the 1990s.

Table 2

Cities in the SCAG Region with Population Over 150,000			
City	County	Preliminary 1999 Pop.	% Change 1980-1999
Los Angeles	Los Angeles	3,781,545	27%
Long Beach	Los Angeles	452,905	25%
Santa Ana	Orange	314,990	54%
Anaheim	Orange	306,298	40%
Riverside	Riverside	254,262	49%
Glendale	Los Angeles	199,178	43%
Huntington Beach	Orange	196,660	15%
San Bernardino	San Bernardino	184,986	56%
Oxnard	Ventura	158,250	46%
Garden Grove	Orange	156,534	27%

Source: California Department of Finance and SCAG (Preliminary mid-1999 data)

The City of Los Angeles, with a population of about 3.8 million, is the second-largest city in the nation, behind New York. There are a total of 34 cities in the region with over 100,000 residents, and ten of these cities (listed in Table 2) have more than 150,000 residents. Between 1980 and 1999, twenty-six cities throughout the region experienced over 100 percent in population growth (as shown in Table 3). The

majority of these cities were in the Inland Empire counties—eleven in Riverside and seven in San Bernardino. The other fast-growing cities were distributed in the following counties: two in Imperial, three in Los Angeles, and three in Orange. (Please see map 1 for changes in population density between 1980 and 1997.)

Table 3

Fastest-Growing Cities in the SCAG Region, 1980-1999					
City	Growth	City	Growth	City	Growth
Palmdale	879%	Fontana	201%	Rancho Cucamonga	121%
Adelanto	589%	Calipatria	184%	Irvine	120%
Lake Elsinore	390%	Hemet	172%	Yorba Linda	119%
Perris	362%	Lancaster	171%	Colton	119%
Victorville	342%	Walnut	163%	Rialto	118%
San Jacinto	256%	Desert Hot Springs	159%	Tustin	107%
Corona	210%	Indian Wells	144%	Indio	106%
Blythe	208%	Coachella	143%	Loma Linda	101%
Palm Desert	207%	Imperial	122%		

(Preliminary mid-1999 data)

Source: California Department of Finance and SCAG

The age of the population determines the need for schools, jobs, transportation, housing, and social and health services. An increase in the number of children in the region has driven the immediate need for additional classroom space, parks, and libraries. The aging of the Baby Boom population will pose a greater demand for care for the elderly and health care.

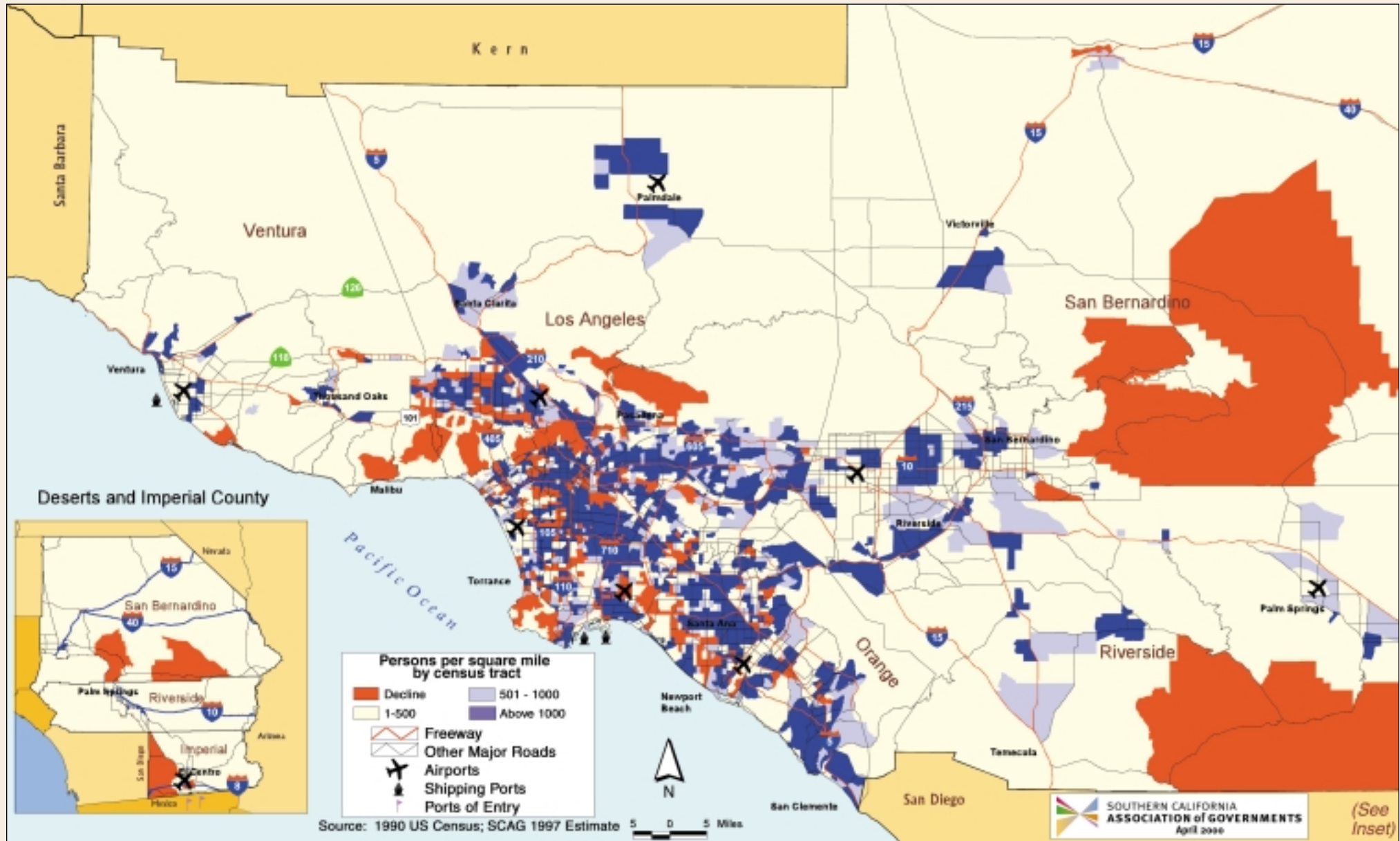
Table 4

Population Estimates by Age Group As of July 1998 Percent of Total			
	0-17	18-64	65+
Imperial	33%	57%	10%
Los Angeles	27%	62%	10%
Orange	26%	64%	10%
Riverside	30%	57%	13%
San Bernardino	33%	59%	9%
Ventura	28%	61%	11%
SCAG Region	28%	62%	10%
California	27%	62%	11%

Source: Bureau of the Census.

Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

# CHANGE IN POPULATION DENSITY Between 1980 and 1997



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Map 1

**T**he Southern California metropolis has been growing rapidly for more than a century and shows no signs of slowing down any time soon. The six-county SCAG region is already home to 16 million people, more than any metro area in the United States

except New York. And most projections estimate that the region will add upwards of 6 million more people—“two Chicagos,” as many wags like to say—in the next twenty years.

In the minds of most policymakers and activists, these statistics conjure up a very particular notion of how this growth will be accommodated. Orchards, ranches, and natural lands will be plowed under and replaced with row upon row of suburban tract homes, shopping centers, and

office parks. This is what “growth” in Southern California has traditionally meant—not only in the suburban era, but all the way back to the 1880s, when the modern notion of urban Southern California first came into being.

But the future will not be a repeat of the past. As an urban metropolis, Southern California is approaching middle age, and the old suburban equation about growth is quickly slipping away. So it’s time to rethink our idea of what growth is in our vast metropolis and what it is likely to mean in the future.

What we think of as “growth” is, in reality, at least three different things. The first is population growth. The second is economic expansion. And the third is the physical change in our communities, driven by new real estate development and public infrastructure projects.

In the suburban era, we tended to view growth as a monolith, for the very simple reason that all three of these forces moved upward together. Communities expanded geographically, adding new subdivisions and shopping centers, as their populations grew and they added jobs. This equation seemed immutable even as late as the real estate boom of the 1980s.



## A NEW URBAN TEMPLATE FOR THE REGION

But the '80s were, in retrospect, the last gasp of this suburban equation. Today, as often as not, these three components of growth move in different directions simultaneously. Our jobs base may plummet, as it did during the recession of the early '90s, or explode, as it has done since. Physical change may grind to a halt or take new, unexpected directions—with developers focusing on retail projects rather than office buildings, for example, or building ever-bigger houses on ever-smaller lots.

And yet through it all, our population continues to increase—because the drivers of population growth are far different than they used to be. No longer are population increases predictably tied to migration of middle-class families from Chicago or Texas or New Jersey. For the first time in our region's history, most of the people being added to our population are being added because they are born here. And most of the rest are immigrants from foreign countries, often living in larger households or more extended families than traditional suburban communities think of as “the norm”.

The result is a new kind of urban template, especially in our older communities, that we could not have predicted even two decades ago. In the 1970s, for example, the “Hub Cities” of southeastern Los Angeles County—the cluster of

factory communities around Huntington Park and Bell Gardens—were rapidly deteriorating into L.A.'s version of the “Rust Belt,” as working-class Anglo families fled. Today, though these communities are poor, they are more vibrant than ever, thanks to rapid and unexpected population growth. Indeed, the population of the Hub Cities almost doubled between 1975 and 1995. Even though these communities did not expand a single square inch in geographical size and the density of their built structures barely changed, they were transformed from hollowed-out factory towns into communities with San Francisco-like human density.

And the region's new urban template is emerging at a time when Southern California is bumping up against the limits of its geographical boundaries for the first time. After more than a century of sprawling across the landscape, we are confronted for the first time with the problem of being “land-poor”.

Our great industries, such as entertainment, emerged early in the century when part of Los Angeles's attraction was the ability to spread out. Now they operate in landlocked locations such as Hollywood and Burbank, while competing with emerging land-rich areas such as Orlando and Phoenix. Meanwhile, our best-known homebuilders—recognizing that Southern California's wide open spaces

are largely played out—now focus on creating small lots in “infill” locations.

Those few far-flung parts of our region that do have abundant land are seeking to protect them permanently—and for good reason. In Ventura County, voters have created a permanent greenbelt and urban growth boundary through the SOAR initiatives. In Riverside County, officials are using the “Integrated Plan” process to accommodate 1.5 million people—while, at the same time, setting aside an additional 200 square miles of open space. Throughout the region, habitat conservation plans will create vast wildlife preserves interspersed with urban development.

Together, all these large-scale land conservation efforts will not simply protect farming and natural resources. They will also create the shape and form of urban growth in Southern California over the next century. The next generation of growth in Southern California will not be added to the outskirts of our existing metropolis. Rather, the growth will be overlaid on top of the old, locked into a bounded urban landscape.

## A RESILIENT REGIONAL FORM

Onto this constricted template we will have to create a workable urban environment for more than 22 million peo-

ple if growth stops after 2025, which is unlikely. So even as we continue to harbor visions of the carefree Southern California suburban lifestyle, we have little choice but to turn inward. In the process, we will have to examine, for the first time, the problems of existing urban and suburban areas on a massive scale.

The problem of reviving existing urban areas is not a new one, of course. With regard to distressed inner-city areas, the region’s awareness and activism dates back at least 35 years, to the Watts riots of 1965. The scale of the challenge before us now, however, is unprecedented.

Over the next decade or two, we must rearrange our land-locked template to create a regional form resilient enough to accommodate two Chicagos in population growth and an unpredictable series of economic changes. Doing so will require far more than simply focusing on a few struggling inner-city areas. It will require us to change all of our assumptions about growth, so that we value every acre, every block, every neighborhood that we have created during a century of pell-mell urban expansion.

Con Howe, Los Angeles’s planning director, stated the challenge well shortly after he arrived in L.A. in 1992. Southern California’s planners, he said, must learn to focus more on revitalizing older neighborhoods and less on hillside devel-

opment standards—because it is in these existing communities, and not on the metropolitan fringe, that we will have to deal with most of our region’s future growth.

At first glance, this may seem like a huge challenge—almost too great a cultural shift for us as Southern Californians to make. But this need not be the case—if we learn how to manage and maintain the singular geographical structure that has always made Southern California different.

Postwar Southern California—the Los Angeles of the “California dream”—was made possible by the decentralized nature of the region. As historian Greg Hise has documented in his pathbreaking book *MAGNETIC LOS ANGELES*, Southern California was shaped not by haphazard sprawl, but by the creation of a carefully considered collection of small villages that were able to accommodate massive suburban growth far more readily than the more centralized cities of the Northeast and Midwest.

Many of these urban villages lost their identity in the suburban era, as the farmland that separated them gave way to a sea of subdivisions, and their civic and commercial centers were devoured by suburban shopping centers. But half a century after Westchester and Panorama City created a distinctive suburban form, Southern California is recy-

cling these older communities to create a distinctive urban form. Two decades ago, for example, the region contained almost no successful pedestrian-oriented shopping districts. Even more than in most large metropolitan areas, community life—such as it was—revolved around indoor malls. But today, an urban “entertainment retail” renaissance is occurring with more force in Southern California than in any other part of the country.

The region is being shaped today not by one or two centers of activity, but by 20 or 30 vibrant suburban downtowns—virtually all of them placed on top of the small-town template laid down at the beginning of the suburban era. These places are the leading edge of a new generation of urban growth in Southern California—one that re-focuses activity into downtowns and town centers, and revolves urban life around places as diverse as Pacific Boulevard in Huntington Park, Little Saigon in Westminster, downtown Beverly Hills, and Valencia Town Center in Santa Clarita.

There is no way for us to know today just how this reshaping of our urban environment will play out. For example, research by demographer Dowell Myers and others has revealed that, contrary to popular belief, the region’s immigrants are on a solid path toward upward mobility. Even so, it’s likely that these immigrant families will remain in city neighborhoods and older suburbs even as they become

more affluent. But these communities won't be radically different than they are now—the physical environment changes much more slowly than society at large. How will this emerging middle class use the long-established urban environment which they are inheriting? Will they retain a sense of civic culture revolving around public space? Will they take advantage of the region's emerging public transit system? Will they opt for long commutes or jobs close at home? In short, will the region's future population seek to pursue a traditional suburban lifestyle? Or will residents choose the emerging “livable communities” model implicit in the revitalization of older districts?

Inevitably, the answer lies in Southern California's singular geographical structure and the way we approach it in the decades ahead. More than ever before, dealing with growth in the region will require us to understand the subtle and diffuse nature of the metropolis we inhabit. We will have to recognize that social and economic barriers to our region's success lie not only in South-Central Los Angeles and Compton, but also in Santa Ana, San Bernardino, parts of Oxnard and Perris, and a whole slew of older suburban communities spread across our landscape.

We will also have to recognize that our older middle-class suburbs—the Glendales and Fullertons of our region—are maturing as well, meaning that even if they are not dramat-

ically rebuilt, they will surely be used in a vastly different way. And we are already coming to terms with the dramatic physical change we are seeing in our affluent suburbs—Irvine, Thousand Oaks, Santa Clarita—where new job centers are changing our commuting patterns and creating a whole new generation of urban villages.

A bounded region, ringed with farmland and natural areas and revolving around dense and lively urban centers. This is the last description any observer would have thought to use to describe Southern California in, say, 1970. Yet it is almost certainly how our region will accommodate a new generation of urban growth within its unique and resilient physical form.

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